TRAVELLERS, TRICKSTERS AND THE OLD MAN

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ABSTRACT

The writer previously theorized a west to east movement of people and language to explain the origins of the Blackfoot people, by taking a fresh look at the existing data and offering an interpretation concerning the topic. As had been previously noted, recognition of prehistoric Blackfoot people living in their traditional territory on the northwest plains is currently assigned by archaeologists to late prehistory. Postulating such a west to east migration of people therefore infers an earlier existence of people farther west, say on the interior plateau during middle prehistory, who may have made that move. Various Blackfoot and interior plateau tribal traditional stories are examined and compared in this essay in an attempt to provide more information and add more weight of circumstantial evidence to support the thesis. A discussion is also offered about the issues of identifying prehistoric migrations of people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge and thank Jerry Potts for his cheerful support and Betty Bastien for her informative book, both of the *Aapátohsipikáni* Tribe. I want to thank James Ritchie and Wayne Choquette for our many conversations, some of which led to the birth of the essay. Thanks to Ian Cameron and my brother for their reviews. Thanks also to Darren Prefontaine and the Gabriel Dumont Institute for their long standing support.

INTRODUCTION

In 2017 the writer theorized a west to east movement of people and language to explain the origins of the Blackfoot people, by taking a fresh look at the existing data and offering an interpretation concerning the topic (Elliott 2017). As had been noted, recognition of prehistoric Blackfoot people living in their traditional territory on the northwest plains is currently assigned by archaeologists to late prehistory. As such, postulating a west to east migration of people infers an earlier existence of people farther west, say on the interior plateau during middle prehistory, who may have made that move. In this essay various traditional Blackfoot and interior plateau tribal oral stories are examined and compared in an attempt to provide more information and add more weight of circumstantial evidence to support the thesis.

The writer takes the position these traditional stories are not “fantasies” or “folk tales,” as sometimes described within an Eurocentrist world view, but that they contain valid information formed by centuries of knowledge acquired by traditional people based on careful observations as they resided on their lands and formed their respective world views, and which was then carefully and consistently transmitted orally by elders to following generations. A description of the Blackfoot traditional world view, how it determines, organizes and transmits Blackfoot traditional knowledge, and how it compares with the Eurocentrist world view and knowledge, along with Blackfoot stories, are offered as examples in this essay. The interior plateau stories in the essay offer examples of the traditional Interior Salish world view.

Additionally, the writer sees such oral stories as complex things, somewhat like languages. Like languages, traditional stories consist of information and structure, and would have historically needed to be transmitted by face-to-face contacts. People needed to travel to meet and speak with other people (perhaps repeatedly) so their stories, and the motifs, information and concepts their stories contain could be accurately transmitted (particularly to strangers). At various times these travels and contacts likely occurred as actual early migrations of people. Therefore, discussion is also offered in the essay about the issues of identifying such migrations.

PREHISTORIC MIGRATION AS A CONCEPT

Migration of people due to catastrophic natural events, drought, starvation, war, or any combination thereof, should be a simple idea to embrace. We see examples everywhere today in the news media. Even so, archaeologically validating the concept of migration during prehistory is evidently not so simple. In this regard, readers may be interested to read an article offered by Stefan Burmeister in 2016 titled: *Archaeological Research on Migration as a Multidisciplinary Challenge.* Burmeister (*Ibid.*:42) essentially argues that the discipline of archaeology no longer has its previous methodological command for investigating migration. He finds no clear distinction in archaeology between independent development, diffusion of knowledge and ideas, or migration as

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concepts for the transmission of cultural attributes, and sees this as a significant shortcoming of archaeological analysis. He goes on to note that all three phenomena can effect the spatial distribution of cultural information and features, but only migration is necessarily linked to the mobility of groups of people.

Burmeister does argue that the history of mankind is a history of migrations, and he reviews in considerable detail the methodological approaches which have been used in archaeology to validate migrations. He then notes (*ibid.*:50) that possible solutions for the problems and controversies he describes could be provided by scientific methods such as genetics (i.e. gene flow analysis) and isotope analysis. Burmeister concludes:

"It is obvious that genetics provides important results and impulses, and opens up entirely new perspectives for the historical sciences …. Scientific results alone provide no historical knowledge, but have to be interpreted within the context of cultural studies." (Ibid.:57)

This writer agrees with Burmeister but adds that while interpretations of scientific results from archaeological data associated with prehistoric migration (and other prehistoric activities) should occur within the context of cultural studies, it should also be acknowledged that the foregoing are inherently linked to an Eurocentrist world view and its related underlying rational assumptions; while at the same time the associated data being examined and interpreted is often derived from people who held another, entirely different world view.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR MIGRATION OFF THE PLATEAU

This writer offers three possible reasons for migration off the interior plateau during middle prehistory:

1. A catastrophic event may have occurred. For example, Keene (2015:25-28) reports evidence of a high-energy erosional event at the Pioneer Site on the Snake River Plain during the Middle Archaic period, dated at approx. 3800 years ago, which he suggests resulted from a catastrophic flood which may correlate with climate change, or possibly volcanic activity at the Craters of the Moon lava field within the Snake River Plain in southern Idaho. Interestingly, this coincides reasonably well with disappearance of the archaeologically defined Western Idaho Archaic Burial Complex from the Snake River Plain (Denny 1991, Plew 2008). However, finding specific evidence to link a particular prehistoric natural catastrophic event to any particular prehistoric migration by people seems unlikely.

2. Climate change may have limited food resources. Lohse (1993:2, citing Butler 1978) argues there was a decline in bison productivity on the plateau in the Middle Archaic period to the point of causing "changes in dietary strategy," which may have been severe enough to initiate migration by hunting and gathering people out of the region. Chatters and Pokotylo (n.d.:75-76) say extensive grasslands replaced steppe shrub vegetation in the southeastern Columbia River basin, large game and mussels were

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exploited in the upper Columbia River basin, deer and roots were exploited in the lower Snake and Clearwater River basins, while mobile hunting strategies remained the norm in the eastern Columbia Plateau during the Middle Archaic period. In this writer's opinion, the effects of climate change during the Middle Archaic period appear mixed but may have been severe enough to change some subsistence patterns, and possibly depopulate parts of the interior plateau through migration.

3. Conflict, engaged internally or externally, may have occurred. However, material archaeological evidence for conflict doesn't appear until late in plateau prehistory. Alternatively, there is considerable material evidence for new technology on both the plateau and the northern plains by the end of the Middle Archaic period, when bows and arrows came into use approximately 2000 years ago. Bow and arrow technology is significantly different from what preceded it and may have come onto the plateau with migrants, or developed on the plateau and carried onto the northern plains by migrants. Also: northern side notched, Pinto stemmed-indented base, McKean-like lancelote, stemmed base, Humboldt, Pelican Lake, Besant, corner notched Elko Series, and small side and corner notched projectile point forms are all said to have been found in the interior plateau region during middle prehistory. (Lohse 1993, Plew 2008).

Further east on the northwest plains, Barney Reeves (1983:315) provides readers with an interpretation of projectile point forms which includes a Tunaxa Tradition, underpinned by Hanna, Pelican Lake and Avonlea projectile point forms, and a Napikwan Tradition, underpinned by Besant projectile points and various later small side notched point forms. Reeves infers both traditions may have contributed to the development of later projectile point forms reflective of prehistoric Blackfoot ethnicity on the northern plains (i.e. the Old Woman's Phase). This writer specifically views the projectile point forms of the Tunaxa Tradition with Hanna, Pelican Lake and the later Avonlea point forms as the potential fossil markers for a middle prehistoric plateau people who may have been antecedent to the latterly identified Blackfoot on the northwest plains.

Stylistic lineages of indented base, lancelote, stemmed, corner notched and side notched projectile point forms all appear to stretch well back in middle prehistory on the Columbian Plateau, as do similar forms on the northern plains. Pelican Lake, Elko and similar corner notched point forms, for example, can also be viewed as part of a broader prehistoric distribution and stylistic tradition of corner notched points, extant over a long time span on the plateau (8000-2000 years ago), on the plains (3600-1800 years ago), and elsewhere in North America.

There is some concurrence with the latter point of view. For example, Trevor Peck (2011) specifically discusses the Pelican Lake Complex on the northern plains at some length, and offers various observations:

"… in view of the widespread nature of tanged and corner-notched points during this time period, a large study would be required [to] *establish the origins of Pelican Lake."* (*Ibid.:*226, citing Dyck 1983).

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"… craftsmanship and technological changes suggest the Pelican Lake complex is intrusive." (*Ibid.*:240).

"… various corner-notched dart forms from geographically distinct parts of the Northwestern Plains could likely trace their origin to a common source in their distant pasts; the notion does not necessarily link them as a single culture." (*Ibid.:*280).

Finally, some Pelican Lake Complex burial sites, such as the Highwood Site burial in Alberta (Peck 2011:257-260), and the Bracken Cairn burial in Saskatchewan (*Ibid.*:278) feature the use of red ochre and exotic marine shells (especially *Olivella* and *Dentalium*) and shell beads, indicating trading contacts with the Pacific coast, likely routed through the plateau region. To this writer's eye the burials and artifacts appear somewhat reminiscent of the Middle Archaic period Western Idaho Archaic Burial complex on the Snake River Plains.

This writer simply suggests that various corner notched point forms, including Pelican Lake and Elko, apparently gained wide acceptance as technically efficient point forms, and came to be widely distributed in middle prehistory. By whatever means, once on the northern plains Knife River Flint from North Dakota came into use as one of the lithic tool materials used for corner notched (and Besant) point forms, just as regional obsidian sources did for many point forms on the plateau.

Conversely to migration, this writer also readily admits that red ochre and marine shells in the above noted burials; similarities between the discussed archaeological burial complexes; corner and side notched, Pelican Lake, Elko and Besant style points; and choices in tool stone could just as easily be evidence for long range trade and cultural diffusion of ideas. While trade and diffusion of ideas would have entailed considerable travel and face-to-face contact and story telling by prehistoric people, the writer instead considers migration to be more accurately described as people travelling to permanently relocate in a different place.

Since there are no scientifically derived samples of prehistoric genetic or isotope data available to assist in this particular study, nor any readily apparent reasons for migration, nor any particularly definitive fossil markers for broader, comparative cultural purposes, then in this writer's opinion, another available source of data for this investigation might be provided by tribal traditional stories. This study now turns to those sources.

PLATEAU TRADITIONAL STORIES

A. James Teit (1912:321-322) reported a Thompson creation story about Old-One and the earth, sun, and people. In the story Old-One (i.e. Old Man) appears as a primary creative spiritual force in the Thompson religious world view.

"A long time ago, before the world was formed, there lived a number of people together. They were the Stars, Moon, Sun, and Earth. The latter was a woman, and her husband was the Sun. The Earth-woman always found fault with her husband, and was disagreeable with him, saying he was nasty, ugly, and too hot. They had several children. At last the Sun felt annoyed at her grumbling, and deserted her. The Moon

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and Stars, who were relatives of the Sun, also left her, and moved over to where the Sun had taken up his abode. When the Earth-woman saw that her husband and his friends had all deserted her, she became very sorrowful, and wept much. Now Old-One appeared, and transformed Sun, Moon, and Stars into those we see in the sky at the present day, and placed them all so that they should look on the Earth-woman, and she could look at them. He said, 'Henceforth you shall not desert people, nor hide yourselves, but shall remain where you can always be seen at night or by day. Henceforth you will look down on the Earth.' Then he transformed the woman into the present earth. Her hair became the trees and grass; her flesh, the clay; her bones, the rocks; and her blood, the springs of water. Old-One said, 'Henceforth you will be the earth, and people will live on you, and trample on your belly. You will be as their mother, for from you, bodies will spring, and to you they will go back. People will live as in your bosom, and sleep on your lap. They will derive nourishment from you, for you are fat; and they will utilize all parts of your body. You will no more weep when you see your children.' After this the earth gave birth to people, who were very similar in form to ourselves: but they knew nothing, and required neither food nor drink. They had no appetites, desires, knowledge, or thoughts.

"Then Old-One travelled over the world and among the people, giving them appetites and desires, and causing all kinds of birds and fish to appear, to which he gave names, and ascribed to them certain positions and functions. He said to the people, 'Where you see fish jump, there you will find water to drink. It will quench your thirst, and keep you alive.' He taught the women how to make birch baskets, mats, and lodges, and how to dig roots, gather berries and cure them. He taught the men how to make fire, catch fish, shoot, snare, trap, and spear game. He taught them how to make nets, beaver spears, and snares. He showed them the spa'tsan-tree, telling them the bark from it was the best for making thread and rope. He taught them how to make dead-falls for marten, and showed them the white and the black arrow stone, telling them it was best for making knives, spear-points, and arrowheads. He taught them how to snare grouse, and use the feathers on arrows so that they might go straight. He also told the people how to cook and eat salmon and other food, and showed them tobacco and pipe-stone, and how to smoke. He also taught the people the relationship of the sexes, how to have sexual intercourse, and how to give birth to children. When he had finished teaching them, he bade them good-by, saying, 'I now leave you; but if you forget any of the arts I have taught you, or if you are in distress and require my aid, I will come again to you. The sun is as your father, and the earth as your mother. When you die, you will return to your mother's body. You will be covered with her flesh as a blanket, under which your bones will rest in peace."

Teit (*Ibid.*:322-327) recorded another, somewhat similar story about Old-One and creation of the Nicola country. In the story Old-One came upon an unhappy woman sitting alone and deserted, and to make her happy he first transformed her into the earth and then transformed her features to create the Nicola landscape. He then created four men and women and taught them the various skills needed to live and prosper in the newly created Nicola country.

B. Ella Clark (1960:27-29) reported a Thompson creation story about a contest between Old Man and Coyote to see who is more powerful. Similar stories are also told by Lake, Okanogan and Colville people. In the story Coyote had finished his transformer work and was travelling southeast of the Columbia River where he met the Old Man. Coyote was unaware this was the "Great Chief" because he thought he was just looking at an old man. Old Man began to make fun of Coyote as if he was someone with little power. Coyote was annoyed and boasted about the wonders he had performed. Then a contest ensued with Coyote moving the course of a river and back again, and then moving a mountain as asked by Old Man. Coyote was unable to return the mountain to its original place. Old Man then moved the mountain back into its place, thus

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demonstrating his superior power. Coyote then realized whom he had encountered and conceded to Old Man's greater power. Since their work was done, Old Man said he was going to leave earth and advised Coyote he would not return again until Old Man did, both of them to work more wonders in the world (someday).

Old Man then made a large house out of ice in a faraway place and put Coyote in it, and placed a large, endlessly burning log in the house to keep Coyote warm. The house is believed to be in the high mountains among the glaciers. Coyote spends his time endlessly warming first one side then the other, thus causing changes in the weather. People believe that Old Man lives either up in the sky world or the high mountains, making rain, snow and loud noises (thunder). Someday people believe Old Man and Coyote will reappear to the loud beating of drums and the reappearance of the dead, borne on red clouds, northern lights and tobacco smoke.

This story confirms the spiritual primacy of Old Man, supported by the lesser power of Coyote as his associated trickster/transformer spirit, both part of the religious world view of the Salish-speaking Thompson people.

C. Clark (1966:68-70) reported two more creation stories between *Amotken* (another name for the supreme one or Old Man) and Coyote, told by the Kalispel and Flathead people. In the first story *Amotken* was said to take the form of an elderly white man. *Amotken* was also described as the creator of the sun, the earth, and all living things, and was known variously as the sun's symbol or its son, who helped the people. *Amotken* created Coyote to be his special helper. The second story described another, similar traditional power contest story between Amotken and Coyote, which described *Amoken* alone having the power to lift a rock, a symbol for the earth.

D. Teit (*Ibid.*:295-296) reported a Thompson creation story describing Coyote, the transformer, as told by both the people of the Nicola Valley and the Fraser River.

"The Coyote was the most powerful in magic, the cleverest, the most cunning, and the wisest of all the ancients. Yet he sometimes made mistakes, and was often selfish, boastful, revengeful, foolish, and licentious. He was the greatest of all transformers, and did many good and beneficial works. He was sent into the world by the Old-one to put it right, and was specially active in the NLaka'pamux, Shuswap, and Okanagon countries. He did not travel, or do any work, in the Coast region, where the Qwa'qtqwaL and others performed, although he went down there two or three times to bring up salmon. It seems he had nothing to do with transformations along the coast, and never interfered with the Transformers there. Neither would he let the Transformers of the coast interfere with, or travel through, his sphere of work. He did most of his feats when of middle age, and he lived a long time on earth. It is said he travelled very far toward the south and east, and some say he reached the borders of the earth. He is said to have been a man of very light complexion, tall, and lean, and a fluent and persuasive orator. In conversation he had a peculiarity of speech, caused by puckering his mouth, and mispronouncing certain sounds. At other times he spoke very deeply, using his throat a great deal; but he could change his voice any way he liked, and could speak all languages. It is supposed he lived with the Old-One before coming to earth, and that, when his time was up, he joined the Old-One again. It is thought he lives in the same place as the latter, but not in the same house. Others, again, say that he lives in the far north, at the edge of the earth, much beyond the most northern of human habitations. Here the Old-One prepared a house of transparent ice for him to dwell in, and put a log inside which burns forever. The aurora is the light of the Coyote's fire

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shining through the ice, or its reflection cast up by the ice. In this place he awaits the call of the Old-One to join him when he shall return to earth. Some believe, however, the Coyote may be sent into the world again ahead of the Old-One, to prepare it for the latter's coming. The Coyote can hear when people speak his name. By rolling over, he causes a north wind, which makes the weather cold on earth. He is also said to cause rain by urinating."

E. James Teit *et al* (1917:12-13) reported a Thompson creation story told by the Nicola Valley people about Old-Coyote and his creation of the Coyote people (i.e. tribal people).

" Old-Coyote (he is called "Uncle Coyote" by some) was the ancestor of all the Indians. He had many wives. From some are descended the Thompson, from others the Okanagon, from still others the Shuswap. One of his sons (probably NtIi'kisEntEm) had two wives, Lu'la and Tce'xa (varieties of ducks) . The latter had a simple-minded sister, the Frog, who acted as her servant. She followed her wherever she went. Like Coyote himself, many of his sons had magical powers. Many of them left descendants. As Coyote travelled over a large part of the world, he left children in many places. The Salish, Kalispel, Nez Perces, Yakima, and Blackfeet, and all the interior tribes, have sprung from Coyote's children. Because these tribes sprang from Coyote, they are called "Coyote people." Some say that the people were not actually descendants of Coyote, but that he was their chief. The descendants of Coyote spread over the country, and occupied many parts that were not formerly inhabited. At one time they all spoke the same language. It was like Shuswap. Some of them were bad people, but most of them were good. Some of them settled in the Thompson Valley and in the surrounding country. At a later date Old-One separated the good people from the bad. He transformed all the bad ones into coyotes. The good ones he led forth, and made them settle at different places, widely apart. Afterwards, when the people met, they spoke different languages. For this reason coyotes abound in the region inhabited by Old-Coyote's descendants, and in the country over which he travelled, but nowhere else.

F. Teit et al *(Ibid.*:122) reported a Coeur d'Alene creation story about the creation of tribal people.

"Division of the Cannibal's Body. Once a large monster inhabited the country around the mouth of the Palouse River. He had killed many people. Coyote, or some other man gifted with magic, made up his mind to rid the country of this evil being. He went to his house and attacked him. The combat lasted a long time, and ended with the monster's death. Then the victor took off the ornaments and clothing of his victim, and threw them about. Then he cut up the body, and threw a piece to each tribe. He threw the head down the river to the Wishram: therefore they now have big heads. He threw the scalp to the Crows, for they have long hair. He cut out the ribs and chest and threw them to the Nez Perce: therefore they are large-bodied. He threw the legs to the Blackfeet: therefore they are a tall people. He threw the heart to the Coeur d'Alene: therefore they became noted as brave fighters, and of cruel disposition. Thus he threw pieces to all the tribes, — to the Salish, to the Columbias, and so on. He thought every one had received a piece. Then he remembered that two tribes had been forgotten. He looked around, but could find no scraps to give them. He took his knife, and, after wiping it with a bunch of grass, threw it to one tribe, probably the Thompson. He threw the grass to the SEntatuu'li. Therefore the latter have never been a numerous people."

G. Teit *et al* (*Ibid.*:47-52) reported four Thompson migration stories from Spences Bridge, B.C. Three stories described the Thompson people as originally living near a large lake far to the south, then attacked repeatedly by an aggressive enemy which caused the Thompson people to migrate four times to four other places until they eventually resettled into the various tribal locations where they are today. All the

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migrations appear to have occurred within the interior plateau with the majority of travel from south, such as from the Columbia River drainage, to north.

The fourth migration story is of particular interest to this study and describes *Peqo's ei eá 'pi.la,* a young Thompson man who fell in love with his sister. (*Ibid*:47-48).

"A man fell in love with his younger sister, and she reciprocated his affection. Some of the people prepared to desert the infatuated couple, while others wanted to kill them. Finally they killed the man, and deserted the girl. They carried the body of the youth along. After travelling far eastward and crossing many mountains (including the Rocky Mountains), they came to a flat prairie with many lakes. In one of these lakes was an islet, and here they deposited the man's remains. Then they left this place and travelled about a day's journey to a locality farther east or south, where there were low hills, meadows, and lakes. Here they settled, as the country abounded in game and birds. Buffalo, antelope, and other game were plentiful. The people said to one another, 'The girl can never find us here, and she will never find her lover's remains.' When the girl realized what had happened, she became distracted with grief. She travelled about many days and nights, not knowing what she was doing. At last, in a dream, she saw the body of her brother on the islet in the lake. In many dreams she received inspiration and advice. She became a shaman, and knew what the people had done and where they had gone. She determined to seek her brother's body. She made clothes and moccasins, and travelled eastward, following the way the people had gone. She lived by shooting and snaring game and by fishing. She often wept as she travelled along, and addressed her brother, 'Peqo's ei ea'pi.la.' Her moccasins were worn out. Finally all her clothes and shoes were ragged and patched. When she reached the lake, she made a canoe (or raft) and crossed to the islet. Then she treated her brother's body as shamans do, and after four days he came back to life. They lived together as husband and wife, and had children. After some years a number of people [the killers and their families?] *went to the lake where the youth's body had been deposited, and there they found him living with his sister. They were afraid, and moved farther to the east or south, in order not to be near the brother and sister. The latter continued to live at this place; and their descendants are said to live there now, east of the Rocky Mountains.*[1] *None of the other people returned to their original home. Therefore the Thompson say that they have relatives east of the Rocky Mountains."*

The foregoing are offered as examples of the traditional world view of Salish-speaking people in the interior plateau. In their introduction to *Salish Myths and Legends,* Terry Thompson and Steven Egesdal (2008) described Salishan narratives as being of two types: traditional stories and newsworthy historical accounts.

"Traditional narratives are set in the Myth Age, before things became like the modern era. A time before the world had been made ready (or perhaps more accurately, put in order) for humankind, and a place where animals were people (and people were animals) …. Hilda Austin, a Thompson river Salish elder, rejected the translation of 'Myth' … because, she explained, 'myth means not true.' For her and numerous other elders with whom we have worked, the events … 'are true.'
" That insight marks an important distinction between Salishan traditional narrative and Western literature. Salishan traditional stories are not considered to be imaginative fiction, nor appreciated as such. A traditional narrative is not intended to be the product of an individual's creativity. The raconteur … instead is relating a legendary event, the details of which have been handed down across many generations. Traditional narratives belong to the group, as a sort of collectively held history of the events and beings of the Myth Age." (Thomson & Egesdal 2008:xxx-xxxi).

Footnote [1] "*The narrator said, 'Probably somewhere in the present countries of the Blackfoot or the Cree."* (*Ibid.*:48)

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BLACKFOOT TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AS A DISCIPLINE

Regarding the *Niitsitapi* (the real people, as Blackfoot refer to themselves), Betty Bastien (2004), wrote her well reasoned book, *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing,* to describe *Kakyosin* (traditional knowledge) — for which this writer offers the following abridged version:

"… Niitsitapi ways of knowing begins with sacred knowledge held in stories and ceremonies that have been handed down through a web of kinship alliances…. Siksikaitsitapi [all the Blackfoot tribes] *ways of knowing are dependent on relationships that are learned in childhood, which create and generate knowledge. All life experiences are sources of knowledge. As an example, dreams are primary sources of knowledge for Siksikaitsitapi. Often dreams are prophetic, contain warnings, or reveal knowledge. Such dreams are passed on through oral traditions among people and are repeatedly found in stories and ceremonies.* (*Ibid.*:77,79).

"Knowing begins with appreciating that life can be understood through the teachings of the relatives, Kaaahsinnooniksi, and Akaitapiwa [elders and relatives]. (*Ibid.*:80).

"In the world of Siksikaitsitapi, knowledge, science, and religion are not separate.… The land, animals and spirits are not separate but an integral part of the Siksikaitsitapi world. They, too, are the source of science and knowledge. This same relationship exists with the elements, earth, wind, water, and rock — all are within the consciousness of the universe [Ihtsipaitapiiyo'pa] and make up the circle of life. All knowledge and wisdom comes through the alliances with insects, animals, and plants. (Ibid.:81-82).

"*Napi* [Old Man] *stories provide the context for human development, specifically regarding the necessary moral and ethical sanctions to follow in order to be Siksikaitsitapi …. Without the sun, life could not be sustained on the planet. Naatosi* [sacred sun power] *is literally Ihtsipaitapiiyo'pa*[1] …. (*Ibid.*:89).

"Most Eurocentred epistemologies are premised on rationality and the objectification of knowing. As a result nature is understood to to be made of identifiable qualities that are, at least potentially, completely knowable. Scientific inquiry is the pursuit of discerning the knowable qualities of an objectified universe. The rational goal of objectifying observation is to identify the various discrete parts that are assumed to exist and from which understanding and knowledge are derived. By identifying the component parts of the universe, or understanding how the parts are interconnected, the knower garners the power to control, manipulate, and predict the movements of people and objects …. Reality, as understood in the Eurocentred world view, consists of physical, observable, quantifiable, reproducible, and controllable phenomena. Scientific rationality and objectivity are considered possible because of the assumption that humans are fundamentally rational beings. The Eurocentred paradigm distintiquishes human beings not only as separate from each other, but also separate from the natural world by virtue of their intellect or ability to reason. (*Ibid.*:98-99).

"Our theory of knowledge is found in the sacred stories which are the living knowledge of the people. The stories explain the nature of reality, the science and the economic and social organization of Siksikaitsitapi. They are the accumulated knowledge of centuries …. (*Ibid.*:104).

[Footnote [1] Other sources, such as *Native American Legends* (*Anon.*: n.d.:1) in the native-languages.org website also identifies *Ihtsipaitapiiyo'pa* as *Apistotoki*, the Great Spirit.]

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"Traditional learning means coming to know [and believe in] *the basic ontological responsibilities of giving and sharing by listening, observing, experiencing, and reflecting …. Kaaahsinnooniksi embody and carry the knowledge to each new generation. This method of knowing and of generating knowledge is the essence of Siksikaitsitapi survival as a people and the basis of survival of the rest of the living world."* (*Ibid.*:150).

In sum, this writer views Betty Bastien's description of Blackfoot traditional knowledge to be another, different, yet structured way of recognizing, ordering and making use of observed information about the world, which reflects their own particular beliefs and world view, and which Blackfoot people have used to survive and make their way in the world for centuries. The Eurocentrist world view also recognizes, orders and uses observed information in a structured way which Eurocentrists believe in and refer to as "the scientific method" or "scientific inquiry," to survive and make their way in the world.

In this writer's opinion, information is information *per se*, to be transmitted and evaluated one way or another when discovered.

BLACKFOOT TRADITIONAL STORIES

H. The earliest narration of a traditional story about Blackfoot creation (or transformation) was apparently recorded by George Grinnell in 1892, and featured the trickster/transformer *Náápi* travelling about traditional Blackfoot territory magically creating the Blackfoot people and various features of the Blackfoot world. To this writer's eye the story is both a legendary and a newsworthy historical account. This abridged version is provided at considerable length and detail to assist the purposes of the essay.

"Oldman was travelling about, south of here, making the people. He came from the south, traveling north, making animals and birds as he passed along. He made the mountains, prairies, timber and brush first. So he went along, travelling northward, making things as he went ….
"One day Oldman determined he would make a woman and a child; so he formed them both — the woman and the child, her son — of clay. After he had moulded the clay in human shape, he said to the clay, 'you must be people,' and then he covered it up and left it, and went away ….
"The fourth morning [after checking each preceding day] *he went to the place, took the covering off, looked at the images, and told them to rise and walk, and they did so. They walked down to the river with their Maker, and then he told them his name was Na'pi, Old Man.*
"As they were standing by the river, the woman said to him, 'How is it? will we always live, will there be no end to it?' He said: 'I have never thought of that. We will have to decide it. I will take this buffalo chip and throw it in the river. If it floats, when people die, in four days they will become alive again; they will die for only four days. But if it sinks, there will be an end to them.' He threw the chip into the river and it floated. The woman turned and picked up a stone, and said: 'No, I will throw this stone in the river; if it floats we will always live, if it sinks people must die, then they will always be sorry for each other.' The woman threw the stone into the water, and it sank. 'There,' said Old Man, 'you have chosen. There will be an end to them.
"It was not many nights after, that the woman's child died, and she cried a great deal for it. She said to Old Man; 'Let us change this. The law that you first made, let it be the law.' He said; 'Not so. What is made law must be law. We will undo nothing we have done. The child is dead, but it cannot be changed. People will have to die.' That is how we came to be people ….
"The first people were poor and naked, and did not know how to get a living. Old Man showed them the roots and berries, and told them that they could eat them; that in a certain month of the year they could

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peel the bark off some trees and eat it, that it was good. He told the people that the animals should be their food, and gave them to the people , saying 'these are your herds.' He said, 'All these little animals that live in the ground — rats, squirrels, skunks, beavers — are good to eat. You need not fear to eat their flesh.' He made all the birds that fly, and told the people that there is no harm in their flesh, that it could be eaten. The first people that he created he used to take about through the timber and swamps and over the prairies, and show them different plants. Of a certain plant he would say, 'the root of this plant, if gathered in a certain month of the year, is good for a certain sickness.' So they learned the power of all herbs.

"In those days there were buffalo. Now the people had no arms, but those black animals with long beards were armed; and once, as the people were moving about, the buffalo saw them, and ran after them, and hooked them, and killed and ate them. One day, as the Maker of the people was travelling over the country, he saw some of his children, that he had made, lying dead, torn to pieces and partly eaten by the buffalo. When he saw this he was very sad. He said: 'This will not do. I will change this. The people shall eat the buffalo.'

"He went to some of the people who were left, and said to them, 'How is it that you people do nothing to to these animals that are killing you?' The people said: 'What can we do? We have no way of killing these animals, while they are armed and can kill us?' Then said the Maker: 'That is not hard. I will make you a weapon that will kill these animals.' So he went out, cut some sarvis [saskatoon] *berry shoots, and brought them in, and peeled the bark off them. He took a larger piece of wood, and flattened it, and tied a string to it, and made a bow. Now, as he was master of all birds and could do with them as he wished, he went out and caught one, and took feathers from its wing, and split them, and tied them to the shaft of wood. He tied four feathers along the shaft, and tried the arrow at a mark, and found that it did not fly well. He took these feathers off, and put on three; and when he tried again, he found it was good. He went out and began to break sharp pieces off the stones. He tried them, and found that the black flint stones made the best arrow points, and some white flints. Then he taught the people how to use these things.*

"Then he said: 'The next time you go out, take these things with you, and use them as I tell you, and do not run from these animals. When they run at you, as soon as they get pretty close, shoot the arrows at them, as I have taught you; and you will see that they run from you or will run in a circle around you ….'

"At this time these people had flint knives given to them, and they cut up the bodies of the dead buffalo. It is not healthy to eat meat raw, so Old Man gathered soft dry rotten driftwood and made punk of it, and got a piece of hard wood, and drilled a hole in it with an arrow point, and gave them a pointed stick of hard wood, and taught them how to make a fire with fire sticks, and cook the flesh of these animals and eat it.

"They got a kind of a stone that was in the land, and then took a harder stone and worked one upon the other, and hollowed out the softer one, and made a kettle of it. This was the fashion of their dishes.

"Also Old Man said to the people: 'Now, if you are overcome, you may go and sleep, and get power. Something will come to you in your dream, that will help you. Whatever these animals tell you to do, you must obey them …. Be guided by them ….'

"After this, Old Man kept on, travelling north …. When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains [Hills]*, there he made some more mud images of people, and blew breath upon them, and they became people. He made men and women. They asked him, 'What are we to eat?' He made many images of clay, in the form of buffalo. Then he blew breath on these, and when he made signs to them they started to run. Then he said to the people, 'Those are your food.' They said to him, 'Well, now, we have those animals; how are we to kill them?' 'I will show you,' he said. He took them to a cliff, and made them build piles of rock like this,* [horizontal V image]*; and made the people hide behind these piles of rock, and said, 'When I lead the buffalo this way, as I bring them opposite to you, rise up.'*

" …. He began to call them, and the buffalo started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the lines. Then he dropped back; and as the people rose up, the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped off the cliff. He told the people to go and take the flesh of those animals. They tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. They tried to bite pieces out, and could not. So Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, and broke some pieces of stone with sharp edges, and told them to cut the flesh with these …. There were some of these buffalo that went over the cliff that were not dead …. [The people] *made large mauls, and broke in the skulls of the buffalo, and killed them.*

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"After he had taught those people these things, he started off again, travelling north, until he came to where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet. There he made some more people, and taught them the same things. From here he again went northward. When he had come nearly to the Red Deer's river, he reached the hill where Oldman sleeps. There he lay down and rested himself. The form of his body is to be seen there yet.
"When he awoke from his sleep, he travelled further northward and came to a fine hill. He climbed to the top of it, and there sat down to rest ….This is as far as the Blackfeet followed Oldman ….
"In later times once, Na'pi said: 'Here I will mark you off a piece of ground,' and he did so. Then he said: 'There is your land, and it is full of all kinds of animals, and many things grow on this land. Let no other people come into it. This is for you five tribes (Blackfeet, Bloods, Piegans, Gros Ventres, Sarcees). When people come across the line, take your bows and arrows, your lances and your battle axes, and give them battle and keep them out. If they gain a footing, trouble will come to you …."
(Grinnell 1892:137-144).

I. Clark Wissler and David Duvall (1908:19-21) later recorded two other versions of *Náápi* creation stories.

"1. The Making of the Earth.

"During the flood, Old Man was sitting on the highest mountain with all the beasts. The flood was caused by the above people, because the baby (a fungus) of the woman who married a star was heedlessly torn in pieces by an Indian child. Old Man sent the Otter down to get some earth. For a long time he waited, then the Otter came up dead. Old Man examined its feet, but found nothing on them. Next he sent beaver down, but after a long time he also came up drowned. Again nothing was found on his feet. He sent Muskrat to dive next. Muskrat was also drowned. At length he sent the Duck (?). It was drowned, but in its paw held some earth. Old Man Saw it, put it in his hand, feigned putting it on the water three times, and at last dropped it. Then the above-people sent rain, and everything grew on the earth.

"2. Languages confused on a Mountain.

"After the flood, Old Man mixed water with different colors. He whistled, and all the people came together. He gave one man a cup of one kind of water, saying, 'You will be chief of these people here.' To another man he gave differently coloured water, and so on. The Blackfoot, Piegan, and Blood all received black water. Then he said to the people, 'Talk,' and they all talked differently; but those who drank black water spoke the same. This happened on the highest mountain in the Montana Reservation [Chief Mountain?]."

J. Wissler and Duvall (*Ibid.:*22-23) also recorded a story titled: *"Old Man Leads a Migration."*

"The first Indians were on the other side of the ocean, and Old Man decided to lead them to a better place. So he brought them over the ice to the far north. When they were crossing the ice, the Sarcee were in the middle and there was a small boy riding on a dog travois. As they were going along, this boy saw the horn of some animal sticking up through the ice. Now the boy wanted this horn, and began to cry. So his mother took an ax and cut it off. As she did so, the ice gave way and only those on this side of the place where the horn was will ever get here.
"Now Old Man led these people down to where the Blood Reserve now is, and told them this would be a fine country for them, and that they would be very rich. He said, ' I will get all the people here.' All the [Blackfoot] *people living there ate and lived like wild animals; but Old Man went among them and taught them all the arts of civilization. (When crossing the ice, only thirty lodges succeeded in getting across, and among these were the representatives of all the tribes now in this* [Blackfoot] *country. At that time the Blackfoot were just one tribe.) When he was through teaching them, he did not die, but went among the Sioux, where he remained for a time, but finally disappeared. He took his wife with him. He had no children."*

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The last story (J) is the only Blackfoot migration story this writer found, a vague transcontinental migration story about crossing the Pacific Ocean and a frozen lake to arrive in Blackfoot traditional territory. However, the footnotes offered by Wissler & Duvall (*Ibid.*:22,footnote 3,4) indicate this *Náápi* story is actually about the Sarcee people separating from the northern Dene, being brought south by *Náápi* and joining the Blackfoot Confederacy, with the frozen lake identified as Buffalo Lake in central Alberta.

Another, more recent story by Percy Bullchild (1985:86) infers *Náápi* was formed from/ by the great sun spirit *Naato'si* in the latter's likeness, although no other sources corroborate Bullchild's description. In sum, they are many Blackfoot stories featuring *Náápi*. Further examples of *Náápi* stories can be found in Grinnell (1892), Clark Wissler & David Duvall (1908), and Percy Bullchild (1985).

There are also various motifs similarly shared by other Blackfoot and interior plateau traditional transformer stories.

Eye juggler is a story motif identified by Yuri Berezkin (2010:136) found mainly in western North America, and described as probably originating with Late Pleistocene people migrating north to south into the New World. The motif is expressed in Blackfoot *Náápi* stories (Grinnell 1892:153-154, Wissler & Duval 1908:29-30), Bullchild 1985:155-158) and in Interior Salish & Nez Percé Coyote stories (Teit 1912:212, 1917:155-157).

Hoodwinked dancers is a story motif identified by Berezkin (*Ibid.*:137-138) and is described as unique to North America, originating in Beringia and brought into North America afterwards. The motif is expressed in Blackfoot *Náápi* stories (Bullchild 1985:143-146) and in Interior Salish Coyote stories. (Teit 1917:10-11).

And finally, fire bed game and trickster tricked are two more story motifs expressed in Blackfoot *Náápi* stories (Wissler & Duval 1908:25-27, Grinnell 1892:155-156, Bullchild 1985:173-178), and similarly in this writer's opinion, in Interior Salish Coyote stories (Teit 1917:7-8,114-115).

DISCUSSION

The stories referenced in the essay are part of a body of a great many traditional stories. All those used in the essay were recorded from Interior Salish and Blackfoot narrators during the previous century, and earlier. The stories are a record of the thoughts and voices of two different tribal people with differing cultural agendas and world views, each living in an adjacent but different ecological region. While the stories offered by one tribal group may well be considered fantasies by another, the discussion which follows is not intended to offend anyone.

The Interior Salish traditional stories (A-F) provide us with descriptions of a religious world view not so different from others in the world, consisting of a principal all-powerful spiritual figure (Old-One, Old Man) from which all creation springs, along with a slightly

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less powerful transformer or trickster spiritual figure (Coyote) who magically carried out various important creative tasks in Interior Salish traditional territories. Together they both create the traditional Interior Salish world view.

Blackfoot Confederacy traditional stories serve similar purposes, but describe a comparatively more complex religious world view. Betty Bastien identified three principal spirits consisting of an undefined all-powerful spiritual force (*Ihtsipaitapiiyo'pa)*; another all-powerful spiritual figure (*Naatosi, Naato'si*), also known as the sun god or leader of the sky people who some Blackfoot people say draws his power from *Ihtsipaitapiiyo'pa (Apistotoki);* and a third slightly less powerful trickster spirit figure (Old Man, *Napi, Náápi*), who magically carried out various important creative tasks within Blackfoot Confederacy traditional territory. The three together create the traditional Blackfoot world view. This writer has provided a selection of traditional *Náápi* stories (H-J) in this essay. Based on the foregoing, the writer is left with the impression of a Blackfoot world view that is somewhat similar in themes to those of the Interior Salish world view, but with a shift or evolution in the array of spiritual identities when compared with those of the Interior Salish people.

In addition to Coyote and Old Man, Interior Salish and Blackfoot stories share other story motifs, e.g., eye juggler, hoodwinked dancers, fire bed game and trickster tricked. Much of this story sharing presumably resulted from residing for a long time in adjacent tribal territories and sharing cultural ideas, or simply from sharing a single common tribal territory and culture for a long time. However, neither circumstance can reasonably be proven without sufficient collateral evidence.

More certainly, such borrowing and sharing occurred in the dog days of prehistory and before the horse days of European colonial entry into the New World; and before the territorial warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the Northwest Plains between the Blackfoot Confederacy and eastern interior plateau tribes (e.g., Teit and Boas 1927-28:25,316-318). There is no mention in the Blackfoot stories of European colonial people nor any of their artifacts. The story recorded by Grinnell (H) described a much earlier prehistoric lifestyle for the Blackfoot people, and inferred that *Náápi* introduced the manufacture and use of bows and arrows some time <u>after</u> the Blackfoot were first created. Further along, the story also described *Náápi* teaching the Blackfoot how to use buffalo jump(s) and locally sourced tool stone and flaked stone tools to kill and dismember buffalo at jumps in the Porcupine Hills.

"The first people were poor and naked, and did not know how to get a living. Old Man showed them the roots and berries, and told them that they could eat them; that in a certain month of the year they could peel the bark off some trees and eat it …. One day, as the Maker of the people was travelling over the country, he saw some of his children, that he had made, lying dead, torn to pieces and partly eaten by the buffalo. When he saw this he was very sad. He said: 'This will not do. I will change this. The people shall eat the buffalo …. I will make you a weapon that will kill these animals' …. He took a larger piece of wood, and flattened it, and tied a string to it, and made a bow …. "Then he said: 'The next time you go out, take these things with you, and use them as I tell you …." (Grinnell 1892:139-140).

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"*When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains* [Hills]*, there he made some more mud images of people, and blew breath upon them, and they became people. He made men and women. They asked him, 'What are we to eat?' He made many images of clay, in the form of buffalo. Then he blew breath on these, and when he made signs to them they started to run. Then he said to the people, "Those are your food.' They said to him, 'Well, now, we have those animals; how are we to kill them?' 'I will show you,' he said. He took them to a cliff, and made them build piles of rock like this,* [horizontal V image]*; and made the people hide behind these piles of rock, and said, 'When I lead the buffalo this way, as I bring them opposite to you, rise up.'*
" …. He began to call them, and the buffalo started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the lines. Then he dropped back; and as the people rose up, the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped off the cliff. He told the people to go and take the flesh of those animals. They tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. They tried to bite pieces out, and could not. So Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, and broke some pieces of stone with sharp edges, and told them to cut the flesh with these …. There were some of these buffalo that went over the cliff that were not dead …. [The people] *made large mauls, and broke in the skulls of the buffalo, and killed them."* (Grinnell 1892:142-143).

The story recorded by Wissler & Duvall (1908:23) about the Sarcee migration (J) indicates thirty lodges travelled using dog travois as they were led south by *Náápi,* and it also inferred they encountered Blackfoot people with a more primitive lifestyle already living south of the Oldman River in Blackfoot traditional territory.

Traditional stories (including descriptions of migrations) often lack intrinsic timelines (Yuri Berezkin 2002:13). So without a scientifically ordered method for establishing internal timelines, traditional oral stories such as these, shared or otherwise, often cannot otherwise be effectively placed in time. Collateral studies provided by lexicostatistical linguistic studies, mitochondrial studies of prehistoric gene flow, and prehistoric isotope studies, may eventually offer the most reasonable prospects for establishing specific timelines for the events described in some First Nations traditional stories.

Even though there has been considerable past exchange of cultural information, storylines and motifs between Interior Salish and Blackfoot people, this in no way precludes the possibility of a West to East migration of some of these people in prehistory. Considering the collateral linguistic information cited (in Elliott 2017:7) about a linguistic evolution from Salish to Proto-Algonquian to Blackfoot, such a migration may have occurred as far back as 3400 years ago. In this regard, the story recorded by Teit (E) suggests the originating common language was "… *like Shuswap."*

"…. As Coyote travelled over a large part of the world, he left children in many places. The Salish, Kalispel, Nez Perces, Yakima, and Blackfeet, and all the interior tribes, have sprung from Coyote's children …. The descendants of Coyote spread over the country, and occupied many parts that were not formerly inhabited. At one time they all spoke the same language. It was like Shuswap." (Teit 1917:12).

So what other information can be obtained from examining these stories?

There are four known, recorded Interior Salish migration stories, three of which in this writer's opinion describe migrations of Salish-speaking people within the interior plateau region. However, the writer finds the fourth incest story about *Peqo's ei eá 'pi.la* and his

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sister (G) to be particularly interesting for the purposes of this essay. The story apparently takes place in prehistory. There is no mention in the story about encountering colonial European people, or using horses, or using artifacts such as firearms, etc. The story recounts an incestuous relationship between brother and sister, subsequent killing of the brother, abandonment (or banishment) of the sister, and travel by the killers to a new land to escape retribution by the sister, who became a shaman motivated by grief and followed them to find her brother's grave. As such, this appears to be primarily a newsworthy story about a very serious abnormal act in a hunting and gathering society for which there were few other realistic options for tribal sanction. In effect, it offers the reader a specific description of a prehistoric internal conflict as a specific reason for a migration eastward by Interior Salish people onto the plains. Finally, the migration story of *Peqo's ei eá 'pi.la* and his sister can also be viewed within the context of the traditional Interior Salish world view, along with other traditional stories (E-F) which additionally describe the Interior Salish people as progenitors of other tribal groups, including the Blackfoot people.

In sum, the Blackfoot *Náápi* stories (H-J) all portray a Blackfoot world created entirely within traditional Blackfoot territory and they do not, in the writer's opinion, indicate tribal migration ever being a consideration in the traditional Blackfoot world view. *Náápi* transformer stories share some of the themes in the preceding Interior Salish transformer stories (A-D), except Old Man functions in Blackfoot stories as a trickster/ transformer spirit figure rather than the principal spirit figure. If the Blackfoot people relocated themselves by migrating from the interior plateau into their traditional territory on the northwest plains as I have inferred, then no evidence or memory of it remains in their stories.

CONCLUSIONS

The writer is the first to agree the essay has been a speculative attempt to reconcile traditional stories as another type of circumstantial prehistoric information.

The stories selected for the essay do reveal additional information about the prehistory of both cultures discussed, and possible information about the origins of the Blackfoot people. The information provided by traditional stories seems best interpreted within the context of the traditional world view within which they originated. Like many others, First Nations people appear to have attached at least as much significance to their stories as they have to their artifacts. And when considered within the rationalist Eurocentrist world view, traditional stories don't appear to me to qualitatively offer any better or worse comparative cultural information than the archaeological information obtained from the analyses and descriptions of flaked projectile point forms reviewed for this essay — rather, the stories simply offer an alternative, different type of circumstantial prehistoric information. The choice of how prehistoric cultural information is analyzed thus becomes a matter of choice between alternative realities and perceptions, so to speak, and a choice of whether or not to improve the comparative quality of artifact analytical techniques and descriptions, and a choice of whether or not to include traditional stories

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within archaeological interpretations. As such, traditional information found concerning archaeological investigations into traditional cultures should ethically be included in site investigations when suspected to have a bearing on those investigations, in my opinion.

In this regard, Alisha Gavreau and Duncan McLean (2016:309,Fig.2) offer a useful model for resolving some these matters. In effect, they essentially suggest leaving chronological and archaeological investigation to the archaeologists, and indigenous knowledge and information to the indigenous traditional narratives offered by First Nations. Where these investigators see productive opportunities for collaborative overlap and investigative sharing is in the realm of prediction and interpretation, and spatial and temporal anchoring, i.e., collaborating in site location and interpretation and developing timelines for the material evidence found within archaeological sites. None of this precludes doing more comprehensive investigations which include traditional stories, nor developing more precise and objective methods and descriptions of site artifacts for better comparative analysis.

Archaeological investigators should also keep in mind migration may sometimes be a very different concept than expected among people with differing world views. For example, Gron *et al* (2002:6-7) note in their article, *The Tent in the Middle of the World*, the polar star is the central axis of the universe in the Evenki world view — sometimes also called a centre pole in the world tent — and that they consider the family dwelling to be at the centre of the family's cosmos, identity and security as they follow their reindeer herds and pitch their tents across northern Siberia.

However, this essay study provides circumstantial information that prehistoric migration of people between the interior plateau and northwest plains may have occurred for an entirely different reason, in this case the Thompson story of internal conflict and incest.

Alternatively, more precise means for determining prehistoric migration is rationally viewed in the Eurocentrist world view as dependent on data derived from scientific methods: C14 dating, historic mitochondrial DNA analyses of gene flow, isotope analyses, and lexicostatistical linguistic analyses. However, prehistoric migration is really not a difficult concept to grasp, and I believe this study shows there is circumstantial evidence to be found in some traditional stories outlining acts of human migration. The real problem is discerning when and where such migrations took place, while working within the vagaries of the preservation of prehistoric information through time, whether it be artifacts, languages, stories, drawings, or paintings. As archaeologists we need to access more types of historical information and provide better, more precise artifact analyses for better comparative data to better support our broader interpretations.

Overall, interior plateau traditional stories do offer circumstantial information that people migrated onto the northwest plains and became identified as the Blackfoot people. Conversely, no such similar information is provided by Blackfoot traditional stories, and thus, the earliest origins of the Blackfoot remain shrouded in tradition and mystery.

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In conclusion, the essay is a story about differing world views, differing points of view and another source of circumstantial prehistoric information for use in archaeological interpretation. As such, the opinions in the essay are entirely those of the writer.

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